

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. A method for sharing knowledge comprising the steps of:
 - (a) receiving information input into a database;
 - (b) organizing items of information in the database;
 - (c) collecting ratings and comments associated with each item of information;and
 - (d) allowing users to access and sort items of information according to selected rating criteria in order to find the most reliable and/or valuable information from the database.
2. The method of claim 1 which includes the step of (e) adding content, multi-criteria ratings and comment data to the database.
3. The method of claim 2 which includes the step of (f) calculating and displaying rating scores for each item of information.
4. The method of claim 1 which includes the step of (g) allowing users to locate and access selected content in a graphic display format.

The method of claim 1 wherein the organizing step (b) further comprises the step of:

2 (b1) constraining the input according to subject and topic classifications choices
3 made by user prior to contributing content.

1 6. The method of claim 4 wherein the graphic display format provides graphic symbols
2 for representing the aggregate rating scores for each criteria and for representing the level of
3 comment support for the content submission.

1 7. The method of claim 6 where a color of the subject descriptions corresponding to
2 information items provides visual indicators of overall rating scores of an information item.

1 8. The method of claim 4 wherein the graphic display format provides a side-by-side
2 display of comments supporting or disputing the content submission allowing individuals to
3 make informed decisions and choices of what to believe or what methods to use to
4 accomplish a particular goal.

1 9. The method of claim 4 wherein the graphic display format provides a display of other
2 comments providing additional information, links or opinions on the content submission.

1 10. The method of claim 2 which includes the step of (h) tracking and controlling the
2 rating process, to prevent a user from voting more than once on a particular item.

1 11. The method of claim 6 which includes the step of (i) displaying the result of an
2 aggregate group rating.

1 12. The method of claim 11 which includes the step of (j) displaying the level of support
2 for an item of information as calculated from the ratio of positive to negative comments
3 submitted for an item.

1 13. The method of claim 12 which includes the step of (k) allowing users to sort within a
2 topic according to personally selected rating criteria, thereby causing the most useful content
3 to rise to the top of the sorted list.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein the rating criteria comprises weighted combinations
2 of rating criteria.

1 15. The method of claim 14 wherein the user is asked to select personal preferences
2 indicating the importance of each rating criteria to them.

1 16. The method of claim 15 which includes the step of (l) allowing users to rate
2 contributors.

1 17. The method of claim 15 which includes the step of (l) allowing users to communicate
2 with contributors by automatic communication links.

1 18. The method of claim 1 which includes the step of (m) allowing users to search on a
2 given subject or within an information item by entering key words.

1 19. The method of claim 1 which includes the step of (n) allowing users to add new
2 subject or topic divisions to the knowledge base.

1 20. The method of claim 4 wherein the graphic display format provides a knowledge
2 base map that is automatically generated as topics and sub-topics are added to the knowledge
3 base.

1 21. The method of claim 1 in which ratings associated with individual contributors are
2 tracked, allowing content submissions to be sorted by source or contributor ranking.

1 22. The method of claim 1 in which content submissions are displayed under a topic in
2 order of submission date, allowing new submissions to be exposed to the group for initial
3 ratings and comment feedback.

1 23. An interface for providing information concerning a subject comprising:
2 a first area that shows the subject and contributor name;
3 a second area that shows the content of the information item;
4 a third area that shows ratings related to the subject; and
5 a fourth area that allows users to submit ratings for the information item.

1 24. The interface of claim 23 wherein a graphic display format provides graphic symbols
2 for representing the aggregate rating scores for each criteria and for representing the level of
3 comment support for the content submission.

1 25. The interface of claim 23 wherein a graphic display format provides a navigation
2 area indicating where the posting is located within the data base structure.

1 26. The interface of claim 23 wherein a graphic display format provides access to the
2 text of comments regarding the information item as submitted by other users.

1 27. - The interface of claim 23 wherein a graphic display format provides a side-by-side
2 display of comments supporting or disputing the content submission allowing individuals to
3 make informed decisions and choices of what to believe or what methods to use to
4 accomplish a particular goal.

1 28. The interface of claim 23 wherein a graphic display format provides a display of
2 other comments providing additional information, links or opinions on the content
3 submission.